

File: COINS

NSA review completed

13 July 1970

COINS LOG

A meeting of the COINS Subsystem Managers was held at NSA, 1000 Thursday, 9 July 1970. I had ~~the~~ difficulties getting in, a usual occurrence since the closing of the CIA Liaison Office at NSA. It looks like it is almost mandatory that non-NSA IHC/SS members call George's office the day before a meeting (if he can find out when that is!) in order to get in.

Very little actual COINS business was mentioned at the meeting-- the only item of interest was that [] was leaving as NSA COINS subsystem manager (no successor mentioned) to join the TABLON Staff. It was also again mentioned that NPIC was going back on COINS--in a passive mode--but no date given.

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Almost immediately George turned the meeting over to [] (with assistance from []) who briefed the meeting on the new system (TIPS I) which is finally going to replace the old system (TIPS Pilot) on COINS--no date mentioned other than the fact that this system has had the gestation period of an elephant. The new system is now operating two hours a day. Unfortunately, the rather complex charts shown were not reproduced for the audience. Further technical questions on the difference between the old and new systems can be answered by [] who attended this briefing and found no difference from the several previous briefings on the same subject he had heard. To a layman, the chief differences seemed to be the ^{replacement} ~~elimination~~ of the 490, ^{by 494} and the addition of 24 (plus one standby) Honeywell ⁵¹⁶ ~~615~~'s. These small computers are used to load the tapes (two per computer). He went into some detail on the TILE program

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25X1 language, on which [] will begin briefing the rest of the COINS community by 'n bye. The TILE verbs:

Retrieval (Extract, copy, etc.)

File Maintenance (Update, add, delete, change)

Post Retrieval Processing (sort, print, create, post, add, and use).

A question and answer period followed. What seemed the most telling question was [] "Why tape, rather than some random access device, e.g. disc?" The briefers seemed embarrassed by this, almost as if they themselves hadn't cared for this part of the design. Their several answers could collectively be lumped as "NSA's tape oriented." Several other answers, such as the economy of tape in the past, were provided.

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After this, George arose to briefly sketch where NSA was headed as far as systems were concerned. There are presently in NSA a number of systems -- 5 or more -- that share the TABLON mass storage device. An effort will be made to reduce the number of terminals necessary to access the various systems.

25X1 [] was named as the coordinator of this activity. It will have two IBM 1360's side by side (one of which is already aboard). I was surprised to hear that IBM is going to manufacture only about 4 or 5 of these devices, in which an electron gun paints bits on a chip-- a photo digital system. I asked [] if it was the expense, and he said no, it was quite cheap (per bit, I presume!); but there wasn't much market for such large capacity storage! Shades of Walnut!

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After this, we were taken on a tour of the computer room. The sight of three 494's and a 490 plus all the peripheral gear overwhelms a mere taxpayer!

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IHC Support Staff

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